

**MINUTES OF THE
AUBURN CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 15, 2005**

The regular session of the Auburn City Planning Commission was called to order on November 15, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Powers in the Council Chambers, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn, California.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Merz, Murphy, Thompson, S. White, Chrm. Powers

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Reg Murray, Senior Planner; Steve Geiger, Associate Planner; Janet Ferro, Administrative Assistant

ITEM I: CALL TO ORDER

ITEM II: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ITEM III: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of November 1, 2005 were approved as presented.

ITEM IV: PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ITEM V: PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

- A. **Variance – 12050 Mont Vista (Cingular Tower Extension) – File VA 05-3.** The applicant requests approval of a Variance to allow an eight (8) foot height extension above an existing PG&E transmission tower for the attachment of multiple cellular antennas. The transmission tower is situated on Lot “B”, which is an open space area within the Diamond Ridge Subdivision (aka: Valley Hills).

Reg Murray gave the staff report. Cingular Wireless is requesting the height extension to accommodate the placement of six panel antennas necessary to enhance their provision of wireless services in the area. As extensions to these towers have the potential to create a visual impact for adjacent properties, staff requires that the applicant obtain approval of a Variance. Ground mounted equipment is also necessary to serve the wireless facility and will be stored at the base of the transmission tower.

The public hearing was opened.

Kelly McNichols of Cingular Wireless was available to answer questions.

The public hearing was closed.

The Commissioners discussed the proposal.

Comm. Merz **MOVED** to:

- A. Adopt the following Findings of Fact for the Variance for the Cingular Wireless Tower Extension:
 - 1. That the granting of the variance is not inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and the zone district in which the subject property is situated.
 - 2. That because of special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of the provisions of this chapter is found to deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity in the same zone district.
- B. Approve the Variance for the Cingular Wireless Tower Extension subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Comm. S. White **SECONDED**.

AYES: Merz, Murphy, Thompson, S. White, Chrm. Powers
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

The motion was approved.

- B. **General Plan Amendment and Ordinance Amendment (Separated Sidewalks) – Files GPA 05-1; OA 05-1.** The City of Auburn is considering approval of a General Plan Amendment and Ordinance Amendment for separated sidewalks within the right-of-way. The General Plan Amendment will amend the Circulation Element of the Auburn General Plan and the Ordinance Amendment will amend multiple sections of the Auburn Municipal Code.

In January, 2004, Auburn City Council considered a recommendation from the Auburn Planning Commission to amend the Auburn General Plan and the Auburn Municipal Code (AMC) to provide alternative street standards for separated sidewalks. The City Council expressed their interest in creating a more “walkable community” and supported the Planning Commission’s recommendation. Council directed staff to identify and initiate the appropriate amendments to provide for separated sidewalks. Work was delayed, however staff has now reviewed those documents for the portions relevant to the discussion of separated sidewalks and related issues, and a summary of that information was provided to the Planning Commissioners.

The Commissioners discussed the information provided. Public Works Director Charlie Clark added details on the Standard Specification street information that was also provided.

The public hearing was opened.

Keith Nesbitt, City Council member, gave additional history on this item. He added information on how he felt a separated sidewalk would create a more walkable environment that would tie in to the City’s Pedestrian Master Plan.

Jack Remington, local engineer, spoke to outline several reasons why street trees are not always a good idea. He noted that tree roots destroy sidewalks, pedestrians do not like to cross wet landscaping, and difficulty in irrigating street trees and plants.

Chrm. Powers stated that street trees would be a nice addition to the City, but also agreed with staff that separated sidewalks should be incorporated into a project’s design as the preferred, but not required, option. They may not always be practical due to several factors as outlined in the General Plan Amendment proposed.

Keith Nesbitt returned to add that topography concerns could be overcome with the design of a project. He believed that separated sidewalks could be accomplished in 75% of the new construction in Auburn, and that if engineers were told it had to be done they would find a way to do it.

Comm. Murphy would like a stronger ordinance as he also felt that no developer would install street trees if it were not a requirement.

Keith Nesbitt added he realized that even if street trees were a requirement, there would be times when it would not be possible to be enforced. If a project were brought before the Commission with a credible argument against this requirement, then it could be waived.

Beryl Smith, local resident and former Planning Commission member, agreed with Nesbitt. He also noted out that the street trees should be site specific as not all trees would be appropriate for locating along a sidewalk.

Public Works Director Clark added information that an approved street tree list is part of new information that has been included in this proposed amendment to the General Plan.

The public hearing was closed.

Comm. Murphy had suggestions for how the amendment information could be enhanced. There was discussion of the Commission recommendation.

Comm. S. White stated she believed that the Commission should not be too specific and that the requirements should be general.

Comm. Merz expressed his feeling on the need for flexibility in the ordinance.

Comm. S. White **MOVED** to:

- A. Recommend that City Council find that this project is exempt from the provisions of CEQA per Section 15061 (b)(3) as the activity has no possibility to have a significant effect on the environment;

- B. Recommend that City Council approve the amendments to the Circulation Element of the Auburn General Plan relating to roadway design standards and street standards as outlined in Exhibit A, C & D;
- C. Recommend that City Council find that the Ordinance Amendments to address changes to the City standards for separated sidewalks are:
 - 1. Consistent with the General Plan; and
 - 2. Consistent with the public interest, health, safety, and welfare of the City.
- D. Recommend that City Council amend Sections 101.020, 101.021, 101.024, 101.032, 158.226, 158.228, and 160.002 of the Municipal Code relating to street standards and parkway maintenance requirements as outlined in Exhibit B.

Comm. S. White then added Condition E to read:

“Recommend that the City Council:

- 1. Amend the tree table in Exhibit E to include categories for Canopy Size and Canopy Shape; and
- 2. Enhance the graphics in Exhibits C and D to clearly delineate the sidewalks and ground surface.”

Comm. Thompson **SECONDED**.

AYES: Merz, Murphy, Thompson, S. White, Chrm. Powers
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

The motion was approved.

ITEM VI:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT FOLLOW-UP REPORTS

A. City Council Meetings

Planner Murray reported on recent City Council meetings.

B. Future Planning Commission Meetings

None.

C. Reports

None.

ITEM VII: PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS

None.

ITEM VIII: FUTURE PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ITEM IX: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Elaine Ferro, Administrative Assistant